

*between us, about them*

Curated by Katherine Jemima & Shaelyn Hanes and co-organized by Leandra Burnett, Youyou Ma & Emily Markert.

October 9 - November 30, 2020

CCA's 2021 Curatorial Practice Graduate Program cohort is proud to present *between us, about them*—a dispersed group exhibition exploring the nuances of the space in-between.

*between us, about them* is the second half of a year's investigation into the meanings of "scale." *Part I: Playing with Scale* explored how the physical scale of an artwork affects the content and perception of such a work in a gallery format. *Part II: between us, about them* examines another aspect of scale—the sliding scale that represents everything in-between two points on a rubric. Systems of measurement allow us to navigate the world around us by juxtaposing one thing against another to calculate size, gauge distance, and define concepts. Recognized not for what they are, but what they are not, these benchmarks exist in a perpetual state of tension.

This relational space is the focus of *between us, about them*. The exhibition's title points to a passage in filmmaker and writer Trinh T. Minh-ha's book *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Indiana University Press, 1989). Interweaving cultural politics, post-coloniality, feminist and contemporary critical theory, Trinh describes the exclusionary binary implicit in speaking about difference as "a conversation of 'us' with 'us' about 'them.'" Trinh writes specifically of the field of anthropology in this passage—a discipline founded on the white/other binary which has played a significant role in mythologizing the "other." Rather than speaking about "them" who are different from "us" in a way that points to, objectifies, or silences the "other," Trinh advocates for "speaking nearby" one another. Embracing indirect and nonsensical language, moments of pause and transition, "speaking nearby" allows one to lessen the distance between "us" and "them." *between us, about them* examines the intervals that fall between multiple points of identity, time, or place when one embraces "speaking nearby." In creating a fluid exhibition space that simultaneously collapses and recreates itself to forge space between two points of measurement, we ask: How do we exist within identities, communities, and geographies that are *not in the process* of becoming one or the other?

As part of this study, *between us, about them* removes the artworks from the gallery, placing each of the five artists' work into one of five curators' homes. Rather than serving as decoration in a domestic space, these artworks act upon us as we react to them. We circumnavigate them in constrained spaces; we rearrange them with our personal belongings; we find ways to share them with those around us. Throughout this process, we pay particular attention to how changes in light, mood, time, and location serve as agents in our interpretation of an artwork, ourselves, and others. Without one singular exhibition space, *between us, about them* questions the white cube's authority, embracing a multitude of sites and experiences as we share artwork in our homes, from the street, on the webcam, through the screen.

As we live with these works, we share our practices through images, videos, and texts on a website. These diaristic archives are in a constant state of flux, reflecting the subtle shifts in dynamics that occur over time as the triangular relationship between curator, artist, and artwork evolves, witnessed by the viewer online. Utilizing our homes as a temporary framework for interpreting these works, we seek to amplify the multiple lives of a singular artwork or object, and to dismantle false binaries of "finished" or "unfinished" projects; "us" vs. "them."

*between us, about them* features a diverse body of work from five artists who center the role of hybridity, identity, and multiplicity in their work: Esther Elia (CCA BFA '19), Maria Guzmán Capron (CCA MFA '15), Heesoo Kwon, Christine Lyon (CCA MFA '20), and Cathy Lu. Website design by Yarin Mera.